

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Accommodations & Accessibility for SC READY Testing in South Carolina, Spring 2016

Listed below are frequently asked questions that the South Carolina Department of Education has received from district and school personnel about accommodations and accessibility for SC READY (the new grades 3–8 ELA and mathematics assessments). The numbers in parentheses after the questions indicate the page numbers in this FAQs document where the answers are located.

Timing Accommodations

1. A student needs an extended or frequent break accommodation. How should this be provided to ensure test security? (page 1)

Scheduling Accommodations

2. A student needs to make use of multiple testing sessions or multiple testing days. Is it better to test the student using paper/pencil or the online test format? (page 1)

Presentation Accommodations

3. Why is oral/signed administration only allowed on the mathematics test? (page 1)
4. Why can't a student have an oral/signed administration for Session 1 (Writing) of the ELA test? (page 2)
5. What formats of signed administration are available for the spring 2016 administration of SC READY? (page 2)

Response Accommodations

6. If a student will be using a typed/separate paper response accommodation with the paper/pencil version of the test, how should responses be returned to DRC? (page 2)
7. If a student uses a Large-Print test booklet, must responses for all test questions (including responses to the writing prompt or TDA item) be transferred to the scannable answer document? (page 2)
8. If a student is using braille to respond to the test questions, how should those responses be returned to DRC? (pages 2–3)

Supplemental Materials

9. What supplemental materials are allowed on the SC READY assessments? (page 3)
10. Why are calculators only allowed to be used in grades 6–8 on the calculator section of the mathematics test? (page 3)
11. When can an abacus be used as a supplemental material? (page 3)

Other Accommodations Questions

12. Where can information about allowable accommodations on the SC READY assessments for students with disabilities and English Language Learners be located? (page 3)
13. The Office of Assessment memo, dated December 31, 2015, includes tables titled "SC READY Online Testing Tools and Supports" and "SC READY Paper/Pencil Tools and Supports." The description of these tables indicates the tools and supports that are available for all students. What is meant by "all students"? (pages 3–4)
14. If a student has an accommodation listed on his/her IEP that is not allowed on SC READY, what should the IEP team do? (page 4)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Accommodations & Accessibility for SC READY Testing in South Carolina, Spring 2016

Timing Accommodations

1. A student needs an extended or frequent break accommodation. How should this be provided to ensure test security?

For all grades, the ELA test consists of two sessions—Session 1 (Writing) and Session 2 (Reading)—scheduled to be administered on two separate days. A student with an extended or frequent break accommodation may take a break or breaks within each session of the ELA test as long as he/she is supervised at all times during the break(s) to ensure that he/she does not discuss the test questions with others or look up information to assist in answering the test questions.

While the mathematics test for all grades is scheduled to be administered on one day, there are two sections on the grades 6–8 tests: a “no calculator” section and a “calculator” section. If possible, a student should complete the “no calculator” section of the mathematics test prior to beginning a break. If a student, due to individual needs, requires a break before he/she reaches that point, the student must remain supervised at all times to make sure that he/she does not access a calculator for any test questions already answered in the “no calculator” section. Once a student begins the “calculator” section, he/she must be closely supervised during any break to ensure that he/she does not return to the previously completed “no calculator” section while using the calculator.

During any break, if the student needs to leave the room, he/she must remain supervised at all times to prevent the student from looking up any content-related information or accessing any non-permitted resources or tools (e.g., a dictionary or thesaurus for either session of the ELA test, a calculator for the grades 3–5 mathematics test or for the “no calculator” section of the grades 6–8 mathematics test).

Scheduling Accommodations

2. A student needs to make use of multiple testing sessions or multiple testing days. Is it better to test the student using paper/pencil or the online test format?

Students may utilize a multiple testing session or multiple testing days accommodation using either the paper/pencil or online test format. However, it is recommended that students who need this accommodation use the paper/pencil version of the assessment. Utilizing a paper/pencil version of the test allows School Test Coordinators and Test Administrators to divide the test into sections based on a student’s individual needs in advance of beginning testing. It also allows for a more seamless administration because the school does not have to contact DRC to have the online test unlocked every time the student is ready to begin work on a new section.

Presentation Accommodations

3. Why is oral/signed administration only allowed on the mathematics test?

In order for an accommodation to be standard, and therefore allowable, on statewide assessments, the accommodation must not invalidate the test results or change the construct being measured. Because SC READY is based on new South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards, a study must be conducted to determine if oral/signed administration can be provided without invalidating test results on any portion or grade level of the ELA assessment. The results of the study will determine if oral/signed administration can be allowed on any portion or grade level of the ELA assessment in the future.

4. *Why can't a student have an oral/signed administration for Session 1 (Writing) of the ELA test?*

The writing prompt on Session 1 (Writing) of the ELA test requires students to respond to a piece of text that they read during the test. This type of prompt is referred to as a "Text Dependent Analysis" (TDA) item. Because the student response is text dependent, oral/signed administration is not allowed on this year's writing assessment. This is a new type of writing prompt based on the new South Carolina College and Career Readiness Standards. A study will be conducted to determine if oral administration can be allowed on future administrations of the Session 1 ELA test without invalidating the constructs being measured.

5. *What formats of signed administration are available for the spring 2016 administration of SC READY?*

Students who only need to access a test form which has been reviewed for bias against students who are deaf/hard of hearing can test using either the online or paper/pencil format. If a student needs a signed administration accommodation for the mathematics test, the student must take the paper/pencil version of the test. It is important to note that online video signed administration (VSL) is not an option for the spring 2016 mathematics test. (However, this accommodation will be available for future online test administrations.)

For spring 2016, any signed administrations of the mathematics test will require use of a paper/pencil test form and a signed administration script. Signed administration DVDs are not available this year, so the signed administration script must be used for all students requiring a signed administration. (However, ASL DVDs will be available for future test administrations.)

Response Accommodations

6. *If a student will be using a typed/separate paper response accommodation with the paper/pencil version of the test, how should responses be returned to DRC?*

All typed/separate paper responses to selected-response items must be transcribed into the scannable answer document prior to being returned to DRC. Student responses which have not been transcribed prior to return will not be scored. Refer to the SC READY TAM, Appendix C for transcription procedures.

For the TDA item (writing prompt) on Session 1 of the ELA test, DRC will allow typed/separate responses to be taped directly into the scannable answer document. Special procedures will be provided in Appendix C of the SC READY TAM; failure to follow the procedures could result in a response not being scored without a district rescore request. (Note that these special procedures will be allowed for the TDA item only.) If a district chooses to, the student response to the TDA item can be transcribed into the scannable answer document using the procedures for transcription outlined in Appendix C of the SC READY TAM.

7. *If a student uses a Large-Print test booklet, must responses for all test questions (including responses to the writing prompt or TDA item) be transferred to the scannable answer document?*

Yes. All responses to SC READY test questions must be transcribed into the student's scannable answer document. Student responses not in the scannable answer document will not be scored. Refer to the SC READY TAM, Appendix C for transcription procedures.

8. *If a student is using braille to respond to the test questions, how should those responses be returned to DRC?*

Brailled responses to selected-response items must be transcribed into the student's scannable answer document by the school prior to return of materials to DRC. Refer to the SC READY TAM, Appendix C for transcription procedures.

Brailled responses to the TDA item (writing prompt) should be transcribed by the school prior to return following the transcription procedures outlined in the SC READY TAM, Appendix C. If a school does not have a staff member qualified to transcribe braille responses for the TDA item into print, the school may return the brailled response to DRC for scoring. DRC will arrange with Volunteer Braille Services to transcribe the response for scoring. Follow the procedures outlined in the SC READY TAM, Appendix C to return a brailled TDA response for scoring.

Supplemental Materials

9. What supplemental materials are allowed on the SC READY assessments?

Appendix C of the SC READY TAM contains a list of supplemental materials allowed on the SC READY assessments. As a reminder, districts are responsible for providing any necessary supplemental materials to a student.

10. Why are calculators only allowed to be used in grades 6–8 on the calculator section of the mathematics test?

In order for an accommodation to be standard, and therefore allowable, on statewide assessments, the accommodation must not invalidate the test results or change the construct being measured. Because SC READY is based on new South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards, a study must be conducted to determine if calculators can be used in grades 3–5 and with certain standards in grades 6–8 without invalidating test results on the mathematics assessment. The results of the study will determine if calculators can be used as a standard accommodation on any additional standards or in other grade levels of the mathematics assessment in the future.

11. When can an abacus be used as a supplemental material?

Because an abacus serves the same purpose as a calculator, abacuses can only be used on the mathematics test in grades 6–8 on the calculator section of the test.

Other Accommodations Questions

12. Where can information about allowable accommodations on the SC READY assessment for students with disabilities and English Language Learners be located?

The attachment to the Office of Assessment memo, dated December 31, 2015, contains tables of allowable accommodations for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs). There are tables for tools and supports available to all students for both online and paper/pencil testing, tables of accommodations for students with disabilities for both online and paper/pencil testing, and tables of accommodations for English Language Learners for both online and paper/pencil testing.

The SC READY TAM, Appendix C contains information about allowable accommodations and administration procedures for students with disabilities. The SC READY TAM, Appendix D contains information about allowable accommodations and administration procedures for ELLs.

13. The Office of Assessment memo, dated December 31, 2015, includes tables titled “SC READY Online Testing Tools and Supports” and “SC READY Paper/Pencil Tools and Supports.” The description of these tables indicates the tools and supports that are available for all students. What is meant by “all students”?

Tools and supports listed in these two tables can be used by any student taking the SC READY assessments. In other words, a student does not have to have an IEP, 504 Plan, or an ELL Accommodations Plan to use these tools and supports.

Online testing tools and supports are available through the online testing platform. Students can access these features through use of the Tutorial and the Online Tools Training (OTT) prior to the assessment to familiarize themselves with the use of these features prior to testing day. For students testing using the paper/pencil form of the assessment, it is the school/district responsibility to make these tools available to students for use during testing.

14. If a student has an accommodation listed on his/her IEP that is not allowed on SC READY, what should the IEP team do?

2007 Federal Regulations §300.160 (b)(2)(ii) require that State and LEA guidelines instruct IEP teams to select, for each assessment, only those accommodations which do not invalidate a score. In some cases, it may be necessary for IEP teams to review the accommodations listed in the student's IEP and in the attachment to the Office of Assessment memo, dated December 31, 2015, to ensure that only standard accommodations have been selected to provide a student access to the assessment. All accommodations used by a student on the SC READY assessments must be documented in the student's IEP. If an IEP team needs to update an IEP to reflect only standard accommodations which are allowed on SC READY, the IEP team can follow the procedures provided by the Office of Special Education Services (OSSES) to create a new, or amend a current IEP to remove any non-standard accommodations from the participation in statewide assessments section, and add any necessary new accommodations to the IEP. District Special Education departments can contact OSSES at 803-734-8224 and ask to speak to a member of the OSSES Enrich Team if more information is needed.